



# NEWS

CONTACT: Tom Marshall  
(916) 657-7202

Office of Public Affairs  
2555 First Avenue  
Sacramento, CA 95818

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **NEW VEHICLE LAWS TO TAKE EFFECT JAN. 1**

**SACRAMENTO**—New laws affecting safety belt fines and drivers with video screens in their vehicles are among the statutes that will become effective Jan. 1, according to the California Highway Patrol (CHP). Included are:

**Safety belt violation** fines will be doubled by (AB 1625, Benoit), allowing penalty assessments and court costs to be added rather than included in the total fine. The first violation's fine will increase from \$20 to an estimated \$41 and for a subsequent violation from \$50 to an estimated \$106 depending on the county.

**Video screens in vehicles** (AB 301, Reyes) prohibits driving a vehicle while a television broadcast or video display is operating if the screen is forward of the driver's seat. The bill, which exempts Global Positioning Systems (GPS), updates the law. Formerly, it applied only to television.

**Teen drivers** under 17 years and six months of age must complete a driver education course before they can get an instruction permit (AB 1343, Spitzer). Currently, a 15-year-old may get a permit if enrolled in a driver training program rather than having completed it.

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**Parents of DUI teens** face misdemeanor charges if the parents knowingly provide alcohol to anyone under 21 who then drives and causes a traffic collision (AB 1301, Simitian).

**Red Light Cameras** Prohibits vendors who sell red-light cameras from being paid by communities on a per-ticket basis (AB 1022, Oropeza). Cities and counties who have red light camera programs must assure that only citations reviewed and approved by law enforcement are mailed to violators. Timing and yellow-light intervals shall be determined and overseen by a local government entity.

**Notification of teacher arrests** Law enforcement officers are required to notify public and private schools when teachers are arrested on suspicion of certain drug or sex crimes (AB 608, Daucher).

The bill was introduced after the April 2003 arrest of a Buena Park teacher who was observed driving at 100 mph. As officers followed, they saw him throwing a bag of marijuana out the window. The teacher had been arrested on similar charges in 2001 but school officials didn't know it.

**Unlicensed taxis** are subject to impound for 30 days if they operate without business licenses and city permits as established by local jurisdictions (AB 299, Lowenthal). The bill was sponsored by the City of Los Angeles. The measure seeks to protect the public against unlawful and potentially dangerous operators.

**Moving companies** which transport household goods and personal effects without state and federal permits face having their moving vans impounded (AB 845, Vargas). The legislation gives recourse to consumers who have been victimized by unscrupulous moving companies.

**Golf carts** and low speed vehicles in Rancho Murieta will be allowed to cross State Route 16 provided the intersection is controlled by a traffic control device (SB 612, Oller).

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Drivers must cross the highway at a 90-degree angle. Many community residents use golf carts for short trips within the area.

**A law passed in 2003 but does not take effect until 2005:**

**Children who are required to be secured in safety seats** will have to ride in the rear seat of a passenger vehicle (AB 1697, Pavley). There are several exemptions, including cases where there are other children in the back seat, where a restraint system cannot properly be installed or where there is no rear seat or the rear seat is rear- or side-facing.

Infants less than 1 year of age or weighing less than 20 pounds must ride in back, no exemptions, if there is an active passenger air bag.

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